

Corbett, Boston

[Materials from John B. Seafield, MD, Indianapolis; acquired Sept. 2010]

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Boston Corbett

(Materials from John B. Scolfield, M.D.,
Indianapolis)

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION

State of New York

County of Rensselaer)
Troy Justices' Court) ss.

Be it remembered, that Thomas H. Corbett, a native of London in the kingdom of Great Britain appeared in the Justices' Court of the City of Troy, the said Court being a Court of Record, having a Common Law Jurisdiction, and a Clerk and Seal, on the 9 day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty five, in pursuance of an Act of Congress entitled "An Act to establish a Uniform rule of Naturalization, and to Repeal the Acts heretofore passed on that Subject", and having then produced to the Court such evidence, made such declaration and enunciation, and taken such oaths as are by said act required, Was in due form of Law,

Admitted a Citizen of the United States

In testimony Whereof, the Seal of the said Justices' Court of the City of Troy is hereunto affixed this 19th day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty five, and in the 79th Year of the Independence of the United States.

Per curiam.

s/P. L. Jones, Clerk

16th comfortable, more is sleep & pain between scrotum.
17th Is up & dressed. + is

Discharged

Will

"Boston Corbett" The man who
shot Wilkes Booth - assassin of Pres. Lincoln
Thos. H. Corbett

Art 24

July 16th Widower

Hatter
Castration

England
1 day.

Is a methodist, & having perused the 18th & 19th
Chapters of Matthew he took a pair of scissors
& made an opening an in long in the lower part
of the ^{scrotum} ~~sacrum~~. He then drew down the testes & cut
them both off. He then went to a prayer meeting
walked about some & ate a hearty dinner. There
was not much external hemorrhage but a clot
had filled the opening so that the blood was
confined in the scrotum which swelled enormous-
ly & was black. He called on Dr. Hodges (R.M.)
who laid it open & removed the blood: he tied the
cord & sent him home. Dress & wash lotion.

17th Last night was troubled w/ flatul. was relieved by
enema. Whole penis & inguinal region much re-
cyressed.

18th Doing finely. No pain or constitutional disturbance

21st Doing well. Removed sutures. Dress & wrap loose.

25th Upper part of wound has healed. Ligatures not
yet come away.

Aug 4th Ligatures fast. No change to note.

Corbett P 163

Aug 18th. Ligatures have come away & he is doing well

15th All healed & he is

Dischd Well.

Janys Lane
Shoemaker

Ran over

20 min

This P.M. while crossing Coast St he was struck by the pole of an omnibus & knocked down. The wheels passed over him. When he got to house, he was stupid disinclined to speak but had his senses almost entirely. There was a slight scalp wound, but no other depression.

The 3^d 4th & 5th ribs were broken just internal to the cartilages on the rt side. He was put to bed, but failed fast & in abt an hr after entrance he

Died.

Autopsy.

The ribs were broken as above stated. The lung was not ruptured, although there was considerable ecchymosis on its surface.

The liver (where the bystander said the pole struck him) was ruptured & broken almost in two.

Boston, Mass.

Aug^t. 29th, 1858

I do hereby certify that I baptized Boston Corbett
in the city of Boston the aforesaid month and year.

Rich. D. Pope
(an Ordained Minister of the
Methodist Episcopal Church)
St. Louis, Mo. June 13th,
1859

C.

12 (^{3 Mos.}
1861.)

N. Y. S. M.

Boston Corbett

Priv., Co. I, 12 N. Y. State Militia (3 Mos., 1861).

Appears on Co. Muster-out Roll, dated

NY City, Aug. 5, 1861

Muster-out to date Aug. 5, 1861

Last paid to May 3, 1861

When enrolled Apr. 17, 1861, for 3 mve. *

Where enrolled NY City *

Mustered in May 2, 1861 *

Where Washington *

Clothing account:

Last settled, 186 ; drawn since \$..... 100

Due soldier \$..... 100; due U. S. \$..... 100

Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$..... 100

Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &c., \$..... 100

Bounty paid \$..... 100; due \$..... 100

Remarks: July 31/61. Sentenced by

Court-martial (roll) 12 months pay.
(Aug 29) 1 over)

* Muster-in roll does not show date of muster-in.

Book mark:

Haslie

C. | 12 (^{3 Mos.} 1861.) | N. Y. S. M.

B. Corbett

Priv., Co. *I*, 12 N. Y. State Militia (3 Mos., 1861).

Age *28* years.

Appears on

Company Muster-in Roll

of the organization named above. Roll dated

Wash. D.C. June 11, 1861.

Muster-in to date *Not stated*, 1861.

Joined for duty and enrolled:

When *Apr. 19*, 1861.

Where *N.Y. City*.

Period *3 1/2* years.

Remarks:

Book mark:

Hastic

B | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Poston Corbett
....., Co L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Descriptive Book
of the organization named above.

DESCRIPTION.

Age 31 years; height 5 feet 4 inches.

Complexion light

Eyes brown, hair brown

Where born London, England

Occupation hatter

ENLISTMENT.

When Aug 4, 1863.

Where New York

By whom Capt Barclay; term 3 y'rs.

Remarks: Taken prisoner at

Centreville Va 22 May

1864. Returned to

duty Jan 28, 65.

Promoted Sergeant

Jan 31, 65. Mustered

out. See register of

discharges.

A. W. Allen

6

16 Cav.

N. Y.

Boston Corbett

Out

Co. L, 16. Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Age 31 years

Appears on



Company Muster-in Roll

of the organization named above. Roll dated

New York city, Sept 5, 1863.

Muster-in to date Sept 5, 1863.

Joined for duty and enrolled:

When Aug 4, 1863.

Where New York

Period 3 years.

Remarks:

Book mark:

Weber

NOV-5

3639764

#06874

overcoat, 1 Canteen, 1 blue
blouse, 1 dk. blue pr. pants,
2 flannel shirts, 2 wooden
socks, 2 pr. shoes.

6 | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Goston Corbett

5 Corp, Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for July 29 to Oct 31, 1863.

Present or absent Present

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: Appointed corporal Sept. 6, 1863.

Book mark:

Weber

Copyist

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

4 Corp, Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Nov & Dec, 186 7.

Present or absent Present

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks:

Book mark:

6 | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Carbett

Out

Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Jan & Feb, 1864.

Present or absent

Present

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks:

Reduced to the
Alas Feb'y 26th 64. R. O.
No. 49.

Book mark:

Werber

6 | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

Priv., Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for March & April, 1864

Present or absent Present

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks:

Book mark:

Lance

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

Priv., Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Apr 30 to Aug 31, 1864

Present or absent Absent

Stoppage, \$ 100 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: Missing in action
June 24, 1864
Haversack 448

Book mark:

Lane

6

16 Cav.

N. Y.

Boston Corbett

Priv., Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Sept & Oct, 1864.

Present or absent. Absent

Stoppage, \$100 for

Due Gov't, \$100 for

Remarks: Prisoner in hands
of enemy June 24/64
Haversack 448

Book mark:

Lamb

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

Priv., Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for May & June, 1864.

Present or absent Absent

Stoppage, \$.....100 for

Due Gov't, \$.....100 for

Remarks: Missing on Search
June 18/64
Heaversack 44¢

Book mark:

Lamb

6 | 16 Jan N.Y.
Boston Corbett^x
Pr. Co. L, 16 Reg't N.Y.C.

Appears on

Hospital Muster Roll

of Division No. 1 U. S. A. General Hospital,

at Annapolis, Md.,

for Nov & Dec, 1864.

Attached to hospital:

When Nov. 25, 1864.

How employed _____

Last paid by Maj. Walker

to Apr. 30, 1864.

Bounty paid \$ 100; due \$ 100

Present or absent Present

Remarks: Paid for Sep.
& Oct. 1864, by Maj.
Nixon

^x Name in pres. col.
Boston Corbett

Book mark: _____

Amos

C | 16 Cav | N.Y.

Boston Corbett
Pot., Co. L., 16 Reg't N.Y. Cav

Appears on

Hospital Muster Roll

of Division No. 1 U. S. A. General Hospital,

at Annapolis, Md.,

for Nov-Dec, 1864.

Attached to hospital:

When Nov 27, 1864.

How employed

Last paid by Maj.

to, 1864.

Bounty paid \$100; due \$100

Present or absent absent

Remarks: Transferred from Dec 10 to Jan 8.

Book mark:

@ | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

S Sergt, Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for Aug 31 to Dec 31, 1864.

Present or absent. Present

Stoppage, \$ 10 for

Due Gov't, \$ 100 for

Remarks: On Parole appt Sergt
31 Oct 64 per Johnson deceased
N 446

Book mark:

Harlan

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

6 Sgt., Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for *Jan + Feb*, 1865.

Present or absent *Present.*

Stoppage, \$ *100* for

Due Gov't, \$ *100* for

Remarks:

Book mark:

Harlan

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

6 Sept, Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for *Wichitupl*, 1865.

Present or absent. *Present*

Stoppage, \$.....100 for

Due Gov't, \$.....100 for

Remarks: *\$5 Trans to W. L.*

Book mark:

⁺
6078 | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

²⁺ Corbett, ¹⁺ Boston
Sergt., Co. ¹⁺ 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on a

Detachment Muster-out Roll

of the organization named above. Roll dated

Washington, D.C., Aug. 17, 1865.

Muster-out to date Aug. 17, 1865.

Last paid to Dec. 31, 1864.

Clothing account:

Last settled Aug. 4, 1864; drawn since \$ $31 \frac{60}{100}$.

Due soldier \$ $\frac{100}{100}$; due U. S. \$ $\frac{100}{100}$

Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$ $\frac{100}{100}$

Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &c., \$ $\frac{100}{100}$

Bounty paid \$ $25 \frac{00}{100}$; due \$ $75 \frac{00}{100}$.

Remarks: Appt. Sergt. 1st Nov.

64 - 75 for trans.

M.O. in compliance with
S.O. 326 A. G. O. June 23, 1865.

⁺
corrected by Jones, En

Book mark:

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

6 Sept; Co. L, 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

for *May June*, 1865.

Present or absent *Present*

Stoppage, \$ *100* for

Due Gov't, \$ *100* for

Remarks: *Is Trans to N. Y.*

No Co M Roll

Book mark:

Harlan

C | 16 Cav. | N. Y.

Boston Corbett

Det., Co. L, 16 Reg't New York Cav.
Sgt. " "

Appears on Returns as follows:

June 1864 - Loss of
near Centerville mis-
sion in action

July 1864 - Absent missing
in action

Oct. to Dec 1864 - Absent
prisoner of war - June
24/64

July 1865 - Absent sick in
Lincoln Hosp.

x Ranks as Sgt. from
Dec 64

Book mark:

King
Copyist.

6 | 16 Cav. | N.Y.

Boston Corbett

Sgt., Co. L., 16 Reg't N. Y. Cavalry.

Appears on a

Detachment Muster-out Roll

of the organization named above. Roll dated

Washington D.C., June 17, 1865

Muster-out to date June 17, 1865.

Last paid to Dec 31, 1864.

Clothing account:

Last settled....., 186 ; drawn since \$.....¹/₁₀₀

Due soldier \$.....¹⁰⁰/₁₀₀; due U. S. \$.....¹⁰⁰/₁₀₀

Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$ 81/_{⁶⁰100}

Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &c., \$.....¹⁰⁰/₁₀₀

Bounty paid \$.....¹⁰⁰/₁₀₀; due \$.....¹⁰⁰/₁₀₀

Remarks: Detachment 4 Aug 64

Due (Sut'n) in more service

\$6.00. \$5-16 by stops Trans

No. in compliance with

Go. 99 a go May 30/65

This entire entry is
(over)

Book mark:

Mahan

REC-4

3956107

1890

cancelled by
red line drawn
through it.

MEMORANDUM FROM PRISONER OF WAR RECORDS.

No. 59

(This blank to be used only in the arrangement of said records.)

NAME	RANK	ORGANIZATION.				INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM—				
		No. of Reg't.	State.	Arm of Service.	Co.	Records of—	Vol.	Page.	Vol.	Page.
<i>Corbett Boston</i> <i>Covert B</i>						<i>DR</i>	<i>Ev</i>	<i>8 48</i>		
							<i>CP</i>	<i>20 15437</i>	<i>91 45</i>	
								<i>11 150</i>	<i>111 43</i>	
							<i>Mis</i>	<i>4 74</i>		
								<i>2 162</i>	<i>23 19</i>	
<i>Corbett Boston</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>N.Y.</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Stonp DW 2. Rull</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>encl 3</i>		

Captured at *Centreville Va* *June 24*, 1864, confined at Richmond, Va., _____, 1864.

Admitted to Hospital at *Andersonville Ga* *Oct 27/64* of *Scorbutus* - *Ret to prison grs Nov 2/64*. Sent to where he died *Millen Ga* *Nov 11*, 1864, of _____

Paroled at *Savannah Ga* *Nov 19*, 1864; reported at *Camp Parole, Md.* *Nov 25*, 1864. *H. I. D. W. L.*
admitted to Hosp. *Div 1. Annapolis Md* *Nov 25/64*

du 12. n. y.

Copied by _____

(Record continued.)

Furloughed *Dec 18*, 1864, for *30* days; returned to *6 P.M. Jan 17* 1865;
deserted _____, 186 ; *Sent to Camp Distribution*
Jan 21/65.

Enrolled as Boston Corbett Co "L" 16th N.Y. Cav.
Names Boston Corbett or B. Corbett,
not borne on rolls of Co. L. 16th N.Y. Cav. J.H.
Penn base (2 specials) ret'd thro. Mr. Reed Jan. 23/62

Copied by *WRA*

Adjutant General's Office,

Jan 21st, 1882

This is accepted as referring to

Boston Corbett,

Co. *L*, 16th Reg't, *N.Y. Cav.*

and records will be corrected accordingly.

Wm. W. Wickham,

Assistant Adjutant Genl.

WRA

note.

DECLARATION OF RECRUIT

I, Boston Corbett desiring to VOLUNTEER as a Soldier in the Army of the United States, for the term of THREE YEARS, Do Declare That I am Thirty one years and _____ months of age; that I have never been discharged from the United States service on account of disability, or by sentence of a court-martial, or by order, before the expiration of a term of enlistment; and I know of no impediment to my serving honestly and faithfully as a Soldier for three years.

GIVEN at New York
The 4th day of August 1863

Witness:

Henry Barclay Boston Corbett

No. B. Cor
Boston Corbett
Volunteered at New York
4th August 1863
By Henry Barclay
Enlistment in Company ()
Regiment of _____
Discharged _____
Received, _____ N. Y.
_____ Dollars of Bounty.
_____ Dollars due.
Co. _____ Regt. _____

CONSENT IN CASE OF MINOR.

I, _____ of _____ years of age; and I do hereby freely give my consent to his volunteering as a SOLDIER in the ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES for the period of THREE YEARS.

GIVEN at _____
The _____ day of _____

Witness:

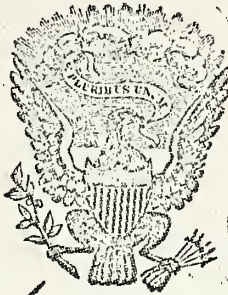
VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF

New York

TOWN OF

City of New York



I, *Boston Corbett* born in *London*
in the State of *England* aged *thirty one* years,
and by occupation a *Woolen* Do HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE to have
volunteered this *fourth* day of *August* 186*3*

to serve as a **SOLDIER** in the Army of the United States of America, for
the period of **THREE YEARS**, unless sooner discharged by proper authority: Do also agree
to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing, as are, or may be, established by law for
volunteers. And I, *Boston Corbett* do solemnly
swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the **United States of America**,
and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whom-
soever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States,
and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Sworn and subscribed to, at *New York City*
this *7th* day of *August* 186*3*
Before *William J. Williams*
1st Lt. 5th Regt.

Boston Corbett

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above named Volunteer, agreeably to the General
Regulations of the Army, and that, in my opinion, he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity which would,
in any way, disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

James H. Thompson
no
EXAMINING SURGEON.

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Volunteer, *Boston Corbett*
previously to his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that to the best of my judgment and belief,
he is of lawful age; and that, in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, I have
strictly observed the Regulations which govern the recruiting service.

This soldier has *Brown* eyes, *Brown* hair, *Light* complexion, is *Five* feet
high. *inches*

Washington Light Cavalry Regiment N. Y. S. V.
Henry Barclay RECRUITING OFFICER

Headquarters, 16th N.Y. Cav'y.
Vienna, Va., Jan 31, 1865

SPECIAL ORDERS

NO. 32

1. Extract

At the request of the Company Commander Private Boston Corbett, Co. L, is hereby promoted to the rank of Sergeant, with rank to date from Nov. 1st, 1864. He will be obeyed and respected accordingly.

By Order:

Col A. B. Sweitzer

_____Gaylord

Capt. _____

On the back of this document, in Corbett's hand:

Please put this in my trunk, Brother Lindberg, as I want to save it. B.C.

Washington City, D. C.,

May 11 1865.

To:

You will appear as a witness before a Military Commission, convened by Special Orders, - No. 244, and - No. 246, dated War Department, Adjutant General's Office, May 6, and - May 7, 1865, in the case of the United States, against David E. Herold, et al., on the 11th day of May at 10 o'clock, 1865, at the Court Room, Penitentiary, near Arsenal, Washington, D. C., and not depart without leave.

By order:

W. H. Smith
For Col. _____, and Judge Advocate.

To

George Westcott H. H. H. H.
10 10 10 10

Washington, D. C., ... 1865.

I certify that _____
has, from the _____ of _____ 1865, to the
of _____ 1865, both days inclusive, been in attendance as a
witness before the ~~General Court Martial~~ which convened by virtue of
Special Orders, Nos. 244, and 246, War Department, Adjutant
General's Office, Washington, May 6, and - May 7, 1865.

Judge Advocate

[SIGNED IN TRIPPLICATE.]

Washington City, D. C.

May 16th, 1865

Sir:

You will appear as a witness before a Military Commission, convened by Special Orders No. 244 and No. 246, date War Department, Adjutant General's Office, May 6 and May 9, 1865, in the case of the United States versus David E. Herold, et al., on the 16th day of May, 1865, at the Court Room, Penitentiary, near Arsenal, Washington, D. C., and not depart without leave.

By order:

s/W. S. Burnett,

Bvt. Col. and Judge-Advocate

To

Sergeant Boston Corbett, 16th N. Y. Cav.

Washington, D. C.

Washington City, D. C.,

July 29, 1865.

Sir:

You will appear as a witness before a Mil. Comm.
convened by Special Orders, No. 346, of the
War Department, in the case of the United States against
Norris Wirt, on the 15th day
of August, 1865.

By order:

A. P. Chapman

Colonel, and Judge Advocate.

To Barton Corbitt

Appt 16th N Y Cav
(at Lincoln Hosp) Washington
D.C.

ROOMS 470 FOURTEENTH STREET,
Opposite Willards' Hotel.

Aug 17

Washington City, D. C.

July 29, 1865

Sir:

You will appear as a witness before a Mil. Comsn., convened by Special Orders No 346, of the War Department, in the case of the United States against Henry Wirtz, on the 15th day of August, 1865.

By order:

s/ N. P. Chipman
Colonel, and Judge Advocate

To Boston Corbett

Sergt. 16th N. Y. Cav.

at Lincoln Hospl

Washington, D. C.

Tooms 470 Fourteenth street

Opposite Willards' Hotel

JOHNSON, BROWN & CO.,
Solicitors of Army and Navy Claims,

B. B. JOHNSON,
J. B. BROWN.

OFFICE, 4 INTELLIGENCER BUILDING,
CORNER OF 7th AND D STREETS.

1488

Washington, D. C., 2^d Oct 1866

Colon Robert

Attorney W. N. C.

Dear Sir,

I am very glad to learn of the pleasant and profitable manner in which you have been enabled to spend your time of late. Time thus occupied is valuable to your own well.

I should be glad to write a long letter but Mr Brown being absent I must refrain.

We have received reports from Perm & Hls. The authorities of the latter place never offered a woman. Perm offered one if it could be captured on her soil. We have nothing definite from the other sources yet but will push our investigations and write soon. Have not seen (Doubtless)

Yours Truly

J. B. Johnson
for J. B. Brown

JOHNSON, BROWN & CO.,

1488

Solicitor of Army and Navy Claims
Office, 4 Intelligencer Building,
Corner of 7th and D Streets.

B. B. Johnson

J. B. Brown

Washington, D. C., 3d Oct. 1866

Boston Corbett,

91 Attorney st., N. Y.

Dear Sir,

I am very glad to learn of the pleasant and profitable manner you have been enabled to spend your time of late. Time thus occupied is valuable to your own soul. Should be glad to write a long letter but Mr. Brown being absent I must refrain.

Have received replies from penn. and Ills.

The authorities of the later state never offered a reward. Penn. ~~offered one~~ offered one if Booth was captured on her soil. We have nothing definite from the other sources yet but will push on investigations and write soon. Have not seen Doherty.

Yours truly,

B. B. Johnson,

for J. B. & Co.

Corbett papers
Kansas State Historical
Soc.
1868

Washington, D.C.
24th July 1868

Boston Corbett
192 Rivington st.,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir, We enclose you herewith bounty check for \$100,
No. 5486 drawn by Maj. A. D. Robinson. Please acknowledge.
Our usual fee is ten dollars.

Yours truly,

Johnson, Brown & Co.

Washington, D.C.
4th Aug. 1868

Sergt. Boston Corbett
192 Rivington st.
N. York

Dear Sir, Yours is at hand with ten dollars. We retained the
discharge thinking we might have occasion to use it in connection
with the City reward.

Yours truly,

Johnson Brown & Co.

On company stationery
The Johnson is B. B. Johnson & may be
Byron Berkeley Johnson who wrote book "Abraham
Lincoln & Boston Corbett"

Corbett papers
Kansas State Historical Soc.
1869

The bearer hereof, Boston Corbett, an acceptable member of the Northwest Bethel Church being desirous of removing from the station, is entitled to receive from the undersigned this certificate of his good standing.

Ezra Withey
Superintendent

New London Station, Conn.

April 19, 1869

Clergyman's Pocket Diary and Visiting Book
1870-71-72

Boston Corbett,
Siloam (Methodist) Mission Church
Camden, M. J.
Residence and Mission,
328 Pine

Contains notes, lists of members (1870, 18 members, 31 probationers)
names of books and tracts, misc. addresses, etc.

"March 30th, '72
Made a silk hat for
Dr. Marcy. Size 6 7/8.
(Paid 7 dollars)"

"For a hundred pounds of hams or beef.
Dissolve in hot water, 8 pounds of salt,
half a pound of Saltnetre, two quarts of
Mollasses. Pack the meat closely, add
water enough to cover, put a weight on
top; & let hams lie six weeks before
smoking. Beef for drying needs only 3 or
4 weeks."

mailed without postage in
"House of Representatives, US" envelope
to Corbett at 328 Pine St. Camden, N.J.
stamped postage due 3¢

1459 _____st.,

Washington, D. C.

Mar. 13th, 1876

Dear Corbett,

I have delayed of writing you for nearly two years
altho I occasionally hear of you. I also occasionally hear of
the whereabouts of J. Wilks Booth, but don't see him--some
democrats actually believe he is living. We are having lively
times--the downfall of Belknap's is a _____ rebuke to his
ostentatious & bombastic career. I do not believe it will hurt
anyone but Belknap and he will likely go scot free as they can
get no witness to go before the grand jury. I appealed our case
to the Supreme Court of the U. S. last fall. (I mean the reward
offered by the City.) I suppose it will be reached next winter.

Hope you are well & doing well. My boy is 2 years old & fine
bright lad. Are you married yet? Let me hear from you when you
have leisure,

& believe me in _____,

Your friend,

Edward Doherty

(copy) 328 Pine st.

Camden, N. J.

Jan. 12th, 1878

Your Excellency,

I take the liberty of appealing to you in my own behalf, to see if you will think it beneath your notice, to do something for one who has risked his life, and (in a measure lost his health) by four months imprisonment at Andersonville to serve that government of which you are now the head. For a testimonial in my behalf, please read the Words of Solomon, in the ninth Chapter, of Ecclesiastes and the 15th verse. They are the words of a Wise Man! A Great Ruler! and a close observer of human events.

Most respectfully,

Boston Corbett

P. S. Please regard the enclosed printed sketch. B.C.

No record that this was actually sent.

Corbett papers
Kansas State Historical
Soc
1878

Letter from Thomas Kirby (who knew Corbett in Troy, NY)

Feb. 17, 1878, Gray, Kansas. "Corn is eighteen cents a bushel and everything is very low".

Letter from Anson B. ~~Mixkaxx~~ Wheeler, Westfield, Hamilton Co., Ind. Mar. 24, 1878. Requests a picture and particulars of the Booth capture. "Excuse bad Spelling for I am but a boy."

an important postcard, mailed
to "Maj. Boston Corbett, Camden, N.J."
It was forwarded to Concordia, Cloud Co., Kansas

Parkersburg, W. Va. Sept. 5/79

Friend Corbett, I saw a long article taken from a New Orleans paper in regard to Doherty and yourself and Booth--Doherty is in New Orleans--393 Magazine st.--I have often thought of you and the boys ~~in~~ of the 16th Cavalry--Do you remember the morning after the capture of Booth you called with your squad all begrimed with dust and we went out and cleaned up and took a Breakfast--then went to Gen. Butler's room where there were so many Governors & Representatives--and when your mouths were sealed so you could not talk the matter over & I gave the reporters of the papers ~~the~~ the whole history--then Gen. Baker--wanted to arrest me & I was a civilian and not muzzled--and many other things. Please write me and I will answer.

Uncle Moses M. Sweitser

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, D. C. July 1st, 1879

Sir:

In the desk of a clerk not now employed in the Department there has been found a large number of letters laid aside and unanswered.

An answer is required to be made to every letter or postal-card coming to this Department and I regret that apology is now necessary to you among others for the neglect to give immediate answer to your application for seeds to which it is now impossible to give favorable reply, our supply being entirely exhausted.

Very respectfully,

Wm. G. LeDuc
Commissioner

Letter

Western Andersonville Survivors Association,
Room 7, 120 East Randolph st., Chicago, Ill

from Felix La Baume, exec. officer

Says he met Corbett at Wirtz trial where he also testified.
Invites Corbett to join and attend reunion in Toledo Oct 1-2,
1879. Offers free honorary life membership.

Corbett resisted joining these organizations.

*The Toledo Blade is frequently referred to in
letters to Corbett. Possibly ran a number
of stories - good lead?*

General Head-Quarters -- State of New-York.

Adjutant-General's Office,

Albany, March 3^d 1880

~~I Certify~~ That it appears from the Records of this Office that Boston Corlett, a Sergeant of Company 'L' 16th Regiment of Cavalry New York Volunteers, was enlisted on the fourth day of August 1863, at New York N. Y., by Capt. Barclay for the period of three years, and mustered into the United States' service on the 8th day of Sept 1863, at New York N. Y., by Lt 1213 Smith, and was mustered out of the U.S. Service August 17th 1865 pursuant to L.O. no 326 A.S.O. June 23^d 1865 at Washington D C

Wm. Moxford
Adjutant-General.

J. M. MOSENA, M. D.

Electic Physician and Surgeon.

Red Cloud, Neb. June 5th 1881

Mr. Corbett.

Dear Sir-

I have seen several articles in the Toledo Blade as to the residence of Boston Corbett, the man who shot John Wilkes Booth. I see from a recent article that the varitable Corbett lives near Concordia Kansas. If you are the Corbett in dispute, will you please write me a short history of yourself: as where you were born, age, nationality, occupation... as to some things in reference to Booth & his death. I want this for a keepsake from the man, whom the Lord directed to avenge the death of Pres Lincoln. Enclosed will find a stamp for answer-

Yours truly

J M Mosen M.D

Direct to Red Cloud - Neb Box 259-

War Department,

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

Washington, D.C. Jan'y 23, 1882.



Respectfully returned to the Commissioner of Pensions.

B. Corbett, Pvt. Company D, 12th Regiment

New York S. M. Volunteers, was enrolled on the 19th day of April, 1861, at N. Y. City, and

is reported: mustered out with Co. Aug. 3/61 as Boston Corbett with a mark: July 31/61 sentenced by C. T. Martineau to be deprived of 2 months pay.

Boston Corbett, Pvt. Co. H. 12th New York S. M. Vol. was enrolled June 2/62 at New York and mustered out with Co. Oct. 8, 1862.

Boston Corbett, Co. H. 12th New York S. M. N. Y. was enrolled June 19/63 at New York and mustered out with Co. July 20, 1863.

Pres. of War Records show him captured and paroled at Harper's Ferry Va. Sept. 15/62 - disposition not given.

Boston Corbett, Co. L. 16th N. Y. Cavalry was enrolled August 4, 1863, at New York, as a private for the term of three years. On muster-rolls of Co. to April 30, 1864 he is reported present. May and June, 1864 missing on scout June 24, 1864. Co. was in action near Centerville June 23, 1864, July and Aug. 1864, missing in action June 24, 1864, Sept. and Oct.

[M. and S.]

1864, absent; on parole. Jan. and Feb. 1865 to June 30, 1865, present. Detachment mntn.

out mail dated Aug. 19, 1865, reports him
mustered out on that date, at Washing-
ton, D. C.

Pres. of War Records show him captured
at Centreville Va. June, 64, admitted to

Hosp. Andersonville Ga. Oct 27/64, with
Scorbutus retd to prison gym. Nov 2/64, and
sent to Milledge Ga. Nov 11/64, paroled at
Savannah Ga. Nov 19/64, but retd to Hosp.
Div. No. 1 Annapolis Md. Nov 25/64, cause
not given, furl. Dec 18/64, for 30 days, retd.
Jan. 17/65, and was sent to Camp Dist.
Va. Jan. 21/65. No other evidence of
medical treatment, or disability on
said records.

A. Steinbock

Assistant Adjutant General
(2.)

Henry

Topeka State Hospital

Register no. 1345

BOSTON CORBETT

Admitted February 16, 1887

Native of England. Age: 54 Class: Public

First admission. Is said to have had several attacks, during a long period of time.

Present condition: Great mental excitement.

Homicidal: No.

History written by Dr. Wentworth

Mar. 16, 1887

This person is the famous Boston Corbett who shot John Wilkes Booth. For several years he has been living in a "dug out" in Cloud County and has been recognized by his neighbors and the officials of that county as an insane man. He has "terrorized" the neighborhood, and threatened the lives of several parties including the county officers. On one or two occasions an effort has been made to arrest him and try him for insanity, but he has either held the fort, or cleaned out the court room and remained master of the situation.

Hoping to do him a favor; to bring him out of his seclusion; and to dispel his marked fancies and suspicions, Representative Knapp of this district nominated him for Ass't. Door Keeper of the house of representatives. His friends aided him to clothing and money to come to Topeka and he assumed the duties of this office to which he was elected. Even on the way down he threatened the lives of county officials who were fellow passengers. The responsibilities and the excitement of his new position proved, as would have been anticipated by an expert, too much for him, and he became filled with an idea of his own importance, and

undertook to "run" the House of Representatives. Threatening to shoot, indeed he forced an adjournment by his threats. Was arrested, taken before the Probate Court, and pronounced insane.

Mar. 28

Corbett is a very civil and comfortable patient, so far as his actions go, but full of cranky notions; and makes frequent demands for liberty; and the possession of his various fighting paraphernalia. He, however, shows his delirium by that he is here by ~~persecution~~ persecution, conspiracy, and fraud. He charges Cloud County officials, his friend Knapp, the legislature, the Probate Court, and the officers of the Asylum with a deep laid plot to get him in here and secure his little property.

Special attendant was, some time ago, placed in Corbett's ward to keep special watch of him, especially at meal time, but neglecting his duty, he left the dining room at dinner time, and Corbett seized the opportunity on some frivolous pretext to make an assault on the attendant with a knife. He was fortunately disarmed without doing any injury.

Apr. 25.

Is in much the same way; in general rather quiet and comfortable; at the same time malicious, fault finding, and disposed to instigate mutiny. He calls down imprecations upon all the Asylum Officers, and charges all his misfortunes to them. Accidents at the Asylum, etc., are judgments on account of the persecutions against him.

May 5.

Has gained considerable in bodily ^{health} since he was admitted, and is much less annoyed by the maladies that have so long afflicted him, he is not at all improved mentally, notwithstanding his gain in weight

and bodily health. He clings to the delusions, that everything is being done by the officers and attendants of this institution that is possible to undermine his health, and even to take his life by poison, which is placed in his food and drink. He also believes that we are members of an imaginary ring or secret society, whose prime object is to work his destruction. Believing as he does, and falling back on the vain pride which besets him, he makes numerous threats and seems to continuously long for blood.

Carried forward to page 164, vol. 11

INSANE MAN ESCAPED.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, May 26, 1888.

DEAR SIR:

BOSTON CORBETT, an insane man, escaped from the Insane Asylum at Topeka this morning, and is supposed to be heading for Cloud County. He is about 55 years of age; about 5 feet, 4 inches high; has plucked all his beard out down to the lower part of his ears; has gray chin whiskers and moustache; gray hair, cut square at bottom, and parts his hair in the middle; he wore a dark jeans suit, and black soft hat; and was riding a bay or sorrel pony with a boy's saddle.

He is regarded as a dangerous man, but was unarmed when he escaped. If he comes your way arrest him and return him to the Asylum at once, or telegraph Dr. B. D. EASTMAN, Superintendent Insane Asylum, Topeka, for orders.

G. A. HURON,

Guardian Boston Corbett.

3-337.

(Old No. 3-464a.)

Div., Co. V. S. E. E. E.

Department of the Interior,

BUREAU OF PENSIONS.

Washington, D. C. APR 5 1902.

Respectfully referred to the Chief of the
Word and Pension Office, War Department,
requesting a full military and medical his-

of the soldier with de-
scripive list as of
No. 16 N. Y. bat.



No other report on file.

CERTIF. No. 248545

Name Boston Corbett
Age 16 Regt. N. Y. bat.
Apr 12 1894 military
Commissioner.

0-4

U. S. Address: Chief of the Record and Pension Office,
War Department, Washington, D. C.

Record and Pension Office,

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington, APR 7 1902

Respectfully returned to the

Commissioner of Pensions,

with the information that in the case of

Boston Corbett
No. 16 N. Y. bat.
military records furnish
the following in addition
to that contained in
report herewith.

Born in London, Eng.
Age 31 years
Occupation Hatter
Eyes brown
Complexion light
Hair brown
Height 5 feet

M. as a sergt.

NAME	AGE	REGT.	COMP.
BOSTON CORBETT	31	N. Y.	BAT.

Medical Records that have been indexed (or dis-
covered) since the report of Oct 21. 1881,

was made show the following additional information:

treated Nov 20 to 25. 6'4
(diagnosis not stated)

Jan 25. 65, Pneumonia

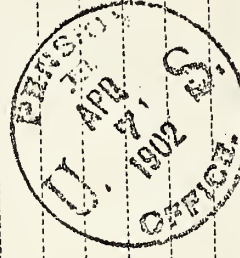
May 26. 12765, D

ret'd to duty

No additional record of

disability found as of

16. M. E. S.



BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

Commissioner

Chief, Record and Pension Office.

(595a)

March 21, 1925.

Sir:

In reply to your letter of the 9th instant, I have to state that the records of this Bureau show that pension was granted to Boston Corbett, late Sergeant Company L, Sixteenth New York Cavalry, by Certificate No. 218545, issued September 30, 1882.

It appears that said Corbett was discharged from said service on August 17, 1865 in this city. He alleged prior service in Companies I and K, Twelfth New York State Militia.

It appears that shortly after his discharge Corbett resided in Camden, N.J.; was employed at his trade as a hatter in Philadelphia; about 1870 was made pastor of the Methodist Protestant Church at Broadway, below Kaighn, Camden; that later he went to Kansas and while employed as assistant doorkeeper of the Kansas House of Representatives he was adjudged insane, in February, 1887, after trial in the probate court in Topeka, Kansas, and was committed to the State Hospital for the Insane, located near that city.

George A. Huron, of Topeka, an attorney-at-law, was on September 10, 1887, appointed guardian of said Corbett by the Probate Judge of Shawnee County, Kansas; prior to being employed as above stated Corbett's home was about eighteen miles from Concordia, Cloud County, Kansas.

On May 26, 1888, Corbett escaped from the custody of the hospital authorities on a pony and went to Neodesha, Wilson County, Kansas, where he left the pony, obtained a small sum of money and boarded a train, destination unknown. He has never since been heard from. About two years after Corbett's disappearance, however, his guardian began correspondence with a man in Texas, claiming to be Corbett;

believing the man was Corbett, Mr. Huron filed an application in this Bureau for restoration of pension. A thorough investigation resulted and there are a number of voluminous reports of special examiners who handled the case. Mr. Huron and a deputy sheriff from Topoka, who were quite familiar with the soldier Corbett, went to Texas for the purpose of identifying the man there and securing the restoration of his name to the pension roll. As soon as this alleged Corbett was seen, however, it was apparent that he was not identical with the soldier of record as he was probably seven inches taller, about fifty pounds heavier and an altogether different built and looking man. He was known as John Corbett--who he really was is not known. This matter resulted in his being prosecuted by the United States District Attorney for the Northern District of Texas. He was tried on October 16, 1905, at San Angelo, Texas, and on the next day was sentenced to a term of three years at hard labor in the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta.

Under the Act of August 24, 1912, a charge of 15 cents per page is made for furnishing copies of papers on file in this Bureau. The record in this case is voluminous, and it would take a clerk a day or more to read and select the papers containing statements referring to Corbett from the time of his discharge to that of his disappearance from the insane asylum in Kansas, and copies of such papers would probably cost considerable.

It is presumed that the above statement of facts will answer your purpose; if not, and you will so state and will state specifically your purpose in requesting copies of papers referring to the life of Corbett, so far as is known, you will be further advised as to whether the same warrants the expense of furnishing the information. The cost of furnishing copies of papers seldom, if ever, reimburses this Bureau for the amount of labor involved.

In any further correspondence relative to this case you should give the certificate number of the claim, as above set forth.

Respectfully,

Acting Commissioner.

JP/ooa

by John Redjinski

Tucked away in the Topeka Daily Capital's report of the activities of the state legislature for January 12, 1887, is a note that "General T.T. Taylor, of Hutchinson, nominated Boston Corbett, of Cloud County, for third assistant door-keeper of the House of Representatives." And so began the last known chapter in the life of this strange, tormented man who shot Lincoln's assassin to become a national hero and was last known as Topeka State Hospital's most celebrated patient.

Thomas H. Corbett was born in London England, in 1832, and came to the United States at the age of seven with his parents to the textile trades community of Troy, New York. He grew up in poverty and learned the trade of hat finisher. Becoming a citizen, he later moved to Albany, Boston, Richmond, and New York City. In New York, he married, but his wife died in childbirth. Unable to pay the resulting debts, he became despondent and began to drink heavily. The Salvation Army helped him and he began to attend meetings regularly. In 1857 he went to Boston, where he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the time of his baptism, he took the new name of Boston, in honor of the place of his conversion.

Corbett's conversion took place in one of the preaching missions in the North Square section of Boston. One night, after one of the prayer meetings which he regularly attended, he was accosted in the street by two young women who, he said, "sought to inveigle him into a dalliance." Shortly thereafter, declaring that he wanted to be holy, he castrated himself. He was treated for his injuries at the Massachusetts General Hospital from July 16th to August 18th, 1858. In Boston, he did piece work at the shop of Samuel Mason, Fr., a hat

manufacturer. When profanity was used by his fellow workers, he would kneel and offer a prayer, holding up the work and irritating the others. Nevertheless, he was a good worker. He earned enough to pay off his New York debts and to buy religious books and tracts which he distributed at North Square.

With the beginning of the Civil War he went to New York to enlist. In New York City he regularly attended the Fulton Street meeting, where his fanaticism and mannerisms were a source of extreme annoyance. In his prayers he was in the habit of adding "er" to all his words, as "Lord-er, hear-er our prayer". When something especially pleased him he would shout "Amen", "Glory to God" in a shrill voice, to the chagrin of those in charge.

He enlisted as a private in Company I, 12th New York State Militia on April 19, 1861, for three months. He enlisted again in Company K, same regiment, June 2, 1862, and was mustered out on October 8th. He reenlisted as a corporal June 19, 1863 and served till July 20, 1863, then joined the cavalry for a three year term in Company L, 16th New York Cavalry, and was finally mustered out with the regiment in Washington, August 17, 1865. There is no record in any of his four tours of duty that the self-inflicted deformity of his Boston days was ever a barrier to his enlistment.

As a soldier, it was said that he followed his conscience rather than military orders. Of course, he was always in trouble. Despite the jeers and taunts of the other soldiers, he prayed loudly in his tent each morning and night. Often he was confined to the guardhouse. He was frequently seen there carrying a knapsack full of bricks as punishment, with a bible in his hand, calling out against swearing, preaching temperance, and exhorting his "wild companions" to "seek the Lord".

One day, at a dress parade, when the colonel cursed the regiment for some action he disliked, Corbett stepped out of ranks and rebuked him for breaking

God's law. A story, probably untrue, is told that on a later occasion he decided that his enlistment expired at midnight of a certain day, and he gave notice that he would go home at this time. Assigned to picket duty that night, he laid down his rifle promptly at midnight and marched off. He was supposed to have been court martialed and sentenced to be shot for this breach of discipline; however, the order was not carried out and he was drummed out of the regiment. Although the story is in character, it is difficult to believe that he would have been allowed to reenlist with such an incident on his record. His service record lists only that he was sentenced by court martial to forfeiture of two months' pay in July, 1861, and that he was reduced to the ranks from corporal by regimental order in February, 1864. The reasons are not specified in either case.

As a private, he reappears in printed accounts when a number of troopers of the 16th New York Cavalry were trapped by Mosby's Rangers near Culpepper, Virginia on June 25th, 1864, and he was taken prisoner. He was taken to the Confederate base at Lynchburg and from there to the infamous camp at Andersonville, Georgia, where he was imprisoned for five months. While he was in prison, a severe rain storm cut out a channel beneath a stump and a spring of fresh water appeared. Named "Providence Spring", it was called a direct answer to their prayers for water by the group of religious enthusiasts led by Corbett. Of the fourteen members of Corbett's company who were imprisoned at Andersonville, he was one of only two to come out alive. On one occasion he escaped, but was tracked down by bloodhounds and returned to the prison camp. When he was exchanged at Savannah, Georgia, on November 19, 1864, he was a "walking skeleton". After being hospitalized at Annapolis for a short time, he had a thirty day furlough before he was returned to duty and promoted to sergeant late in January, 1865. At the time of Lincoln's assassination, he had not fully regained his health.

When twenty-six year old John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Corbett was a sergeant in Company L, 16th New York Cavalry, then bivouacked at Vienna, Virginia, fourteen miles west of Washington. He was picked as a member of the twenty-five man detachment sent out "under a discreet officer" to find Booth, in the search directed by Col. Lafayette C. Baker, chief of the National Secret Service. The detachment, commanded by 1st Lieut. Edward P. Doherty, the "discreet" officer selected, and accompanied by Col. Everton J. Conger and Lieut. Luther B. Baker, had orders not to shoot Booth but to capture him alive. After scouring the Virginia countryside for eleven days, they traced Booth and his companion, David Herold, to an old tobacco dry house or barn on the farm of Richard H. Garrett, near Port Royal on the Rapahannock River. At two o'clock on the morning of April 26th, they surrounded the barn and ordered Booth to surrender. Corbett volunteered to go in and bring Booth out, but Col. Conger refused him. Conger then had the barn set afire, whereupon Corbett asked Lieut. Doherty to let him go in for Booth, but he also refused. According to his own account, Corbett saw Booth through the slats in the barn and feeling sure his commander would be fired upon, he shot Booth through the neck, inflicting a wound which resulted in Booth's death four hours later.

Corbett was charged by Conger with breach of military discipline "in firing without Doherty's order". He was sent to Washington to await court martial. There he met and talked with B.B. Johnson, who reported the interview to Secretary of War Stanton. Corbett was taken before Stanton, Assistant Secretary Dana, the Adjutant General, Johnson, and a Washington correspondent. Doherty testified that Corbett fired on Booth without orders, that he was a brave soldier but somewhat impulsive. Corbett did not deny this, only adding the information about his offers to go in for Booth, which Doherty corroborated. Stanton then made

this statement: "The rebel is dead, the patriot lives. He has saved us continued excitement, delay, and expense. The patriot is released." After the meeting, Corbett went to Johnson's house for dinner, then to Brady's to be photographed.

Corbett's official statement, according to War Department records, reads: " I saw Booth in the act of stooping or springing, and concluded he was going to use his weapons. I immediately took steady aim upon him with my revolver and fired, shooting him through the neck and head. He was then carried out of the barn before the fire reached him; he was taken to the piazza of the house..... Lieut. Doherty and the detective officers who were in front of the barn did not seem to know that I had shot him, but supposed he had shot himself, until I informed Lieut. Doherty of the fact.....showing him my pistol which bore evidence of the truth of my statement, which was also confirmed by the man placed at my right hand who saw it....."

Also in the official records is Lieut. Doherty's testimony of Corbett's request to enter the barn, and this statement by him: ".....I would call the attention of the Commanding General to the efficiency of Sergt. Boston Corbett, Company L, 16th New York Cavalry, who was untiring in his efforts to bring the murderers to justice. His soldierly qualities have been tested before this occasion and, in my judgment, are second to none in the service....."

After Lincoln's death, Congress offered a \$75,000 reward for the capture of Booth, and many states and cities offered rewards as well. All of these were later withdrawn, except the one offered by Congress. Corbett received some of the reward money, although accounts of the amount vary from about \$1,600 to \$2,400.

Corbett next appears in the news in August, 1865, as a volunteer witness at the trial of Major Henry Wirz, commandant of the Andersonville prison. Wirz

was charged with atrocities committed against the prisoners. Corbett testified that during an unseasonable spell of cold weather, he huddled with Wirz's hound dogs to keep warm. Asked by counsel for Wirz why the dogs had not bitten him as they had other prisoners, Corbett replied: "The same power that kept the lions from biting Daniel to pieces is the same in whom I trust!"

After mustering out with his regiment in August, 1865, Corbett returned to work for hat manufacturer Mason in Boston and resumed religious activities at the Bromfield Street church. Then a new style of hat came into fashion, manufactured in Danbury, Connecticut. Corbett went there, obtained employment, and went on preaching.

When Corbett moved to the Philadelphia area is not known, but a pass to the International Exhibition, Philadelphia, May 10-November 10, 1870, is in the Kansas State Historical Society collection. It bears a photograph of Corbett, and attendance dates for most of October have been punched out. Sometime in 1870, a correspondent for the Philadelphia Sunday World interviewed Corbett. He was then living alone in a small rundown house in Camden, New Jersey. He was working at his trade as a hatter in nearby Philadelphia. He had been admitted to the Methodist Conference of New Jersey on trial as a preacher, and was assigned to mission work in Camden. In his kitchen were a half dozen rough benches used by the little band of Methodists to whom he preached each night. When the reporter inquired about his unusual name, he held up a testament with the name "Boston Corbett" printed on it in black ink and said, "Young man, there is my name; the only one I shall ever own. In Boston I was converted; there met my Redeemer, and Boston is the only name I wish to be called by." About the shooting of Booth, he said, "On that eventful morning of my life, as I shot the assassin crouched like a savage beast in the recesses of the barn, I felt I was doing my duty to God and my country. Were the ghosts of twenty assassins to rise

1869

employed
as quoted

against me, they could not disturb a calm Christian spirit."

About 1876 Corbett came to Kansas, where he acquired a soldier's homestead of eighty acres in hilly country near Concordia, in Cloud County. He lived there in a dugout. Some of his neighbors and county officials thought he was insane, as he had several times threatened the lives of a number of people. It is said that one or two attempts were made to arrest and try him for insanity, but he managed to avoid trial. He was reported to have driven the county assessor from his door, and he threatened to shoot a United States' census enumerator.

With the prospect of a job in Topeka, Corbett was enabled to travel there when the Grand Army of the Republic Post in Concordia bought him a suit of clothes and contributed money for the trip. On the way, he threatened the lives of county officials who were his fellow passengers. On January 13, 1887, Corbett was nominated by General T.T. Taylor of Hutchinson to be third assistant doorkeeper of the Kansas House of Representatives. The motion was seconded by George W. Knapp, of Cloud County, and Mr. Glass, of Marshall County, after Mr. Glass reported that the democrats had no nominations to make. He was then unanimously elected. Newspaper stories say that when Knapp identified Corbett as the man who shot Booth and related that he was in poor circumstances, all of the other candidates were withdrawn. Although it was not brought out in the House, some people had misgivings about Corbett's election. An ex-member of the House from Cloud County predicted that Corbett would kill somebody before the end of the session.

At this time, Corbett was 55 years old, of small stature, and wore a moustache and beard. He was said to be peculiar enough in dress and manner to attract attention in any gathering. Nevertheless, for a while he faithfully carried out his duties in the House, and seemed to take pleasure in the atten-

tion he attracted. He was always willing to tell his story, repeating that he was inspired by God to kill Booth. On January 19th, 1887, he wrote an account of it to one J.B. Hoover, who had inquired about his experience.

About February 1st or 2nd, 1887, according to Mrs. L.W. Moore, 295 Jefferson Street, at whose house he had been staying, he came home very excited and said that three men had threatened his life for having killed Booth. He took his old army cartridge belt and a .38-caliber revolver from his trunk and wore them from then on. He also began to attend meetings at the Salvation Army barracks, 505 Kansas Avenue, regularly marching and preaching there.

On the morning of February 15th, before the House convened, Corbett threatened Benjamin Williams and Wilcox, two of his fellow doorkeepers. Confronting them with his revolver, he declared he would shoot them. They left hastily with Corbett following, but they managed to escape. When Major Norton, the sergeant-at-arms, heard of the incident, he went out to talk to Corbett, who was sweeping the stairway. Corbett pointed the revolver at Norton, telling him to leave or he would put a hole in him. Then he took his post in the west gallery and was quiet for an hour or two, until a reporter from the Topeka Journal tried to interview him. Again, Corbett took out the gun and threatened to shoot, and the reporter "suddenly remembered that the law was very severe on reporters who interviewed cranks," as he put it, and made a hasty departure.

At noon Mr. Conrad, the representative from Nemaha County, passed by. Corbett mistook him for Speaker Smith, whom he closely resembled, pointed the gun at him, and said, "If you arrest me I'll shoot you." Police were finally called, and as Corbett was leaving the state house to have dinner he was arrested by police, led by John W. Gardiner, 132 N. Quincy Avenue. He was relieved of his gun and a knife, and was taken to the station house. He was excited all day. During the afternoon his benefactor, Mr. Knapp came to visit him. Corbett told

him, "I never want to see you again, until I appear at the judgement bar of Heaven to testify against you and send your soul to Hell."

That afternoon, the House passed a resolution discharging Corbett as door-keeper.

On February 16th, he was taken to the court of Probate Judge A.B. Quinton for an Inquiry in Lunacy. He appeared before a jury composed of R. Blago; David E. Davis, 1122 Prospect Avenue, a clerk; J.F. Carter; William H. Gill, jailor at the county jail; W.L. Gordon; and William S. Lindsay, physician juror and a former assistant superintendent of the Topeka Insane Asylum.⁽¹⁾ He was adjudged insane and a Steward's Warrant was issued ordering asylum officials to receive him. In the record, Dr. Lindsay attributes the cause of Corbett's insanity to confinement at Andersonville prison during the Civil War. He was admitted to the Topeka Insane Asylum the same day, and was examined by Dr. Lowell F. Wentworth, the assistant superintendent.

He was a difficult patient during 1887. He believed that his confinement was the result of persecution, fraud, and conspiracy. He charged Cloud County officials, his benefactor Knapp, and the officers of the asylum with a plot to secure his property. On one occasion in March, a special attendant assigned to watch him at dinner time left his post. Corbett seized a knife and attacked him, but was disarmed before any harm could be done. He thought that all misfortunes, such as accidents which occurred at the hospital, were judgements rendered on account of the persecutions against him. In May, he claimed that all officials were members of a secret society engaged in undermining his health by poisoning his food and drink.

(1) Rades Topeka City Directory, 1887-88, lists four Carters with the initial J. It is most likely that the one on this jury was John, a city marshal. There are two W.L. Gordons listed: William L., 401 Western, a labor agent for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad, and Wilson L., 229 Van Buren, a capitalist. The R. Blago was probably Richard J. Blago, 1100 Tyler, a carpenter.

In June or July he was visited by Richard Thatcher, superintendent of the city schools of Neodesha, Kansas. Thatcher was a highly respected teacher and president of his county teachers' association, who had been a fellow prisoner with Corbett at Andersonville. He did not believe Corbett was insane. After talking with him, Thatcher went to the office of Probate Judge Quinton and persuaded the judge to issue an unconditional discharge for Corbett. This was done without consulting the asylum authorities. By chance, the judge had occasion to get in touch with asylum officials. He mentioned the order, and after some discussion it was rescinded.

In May of 1888 Corbett was unusually excited and violent. He made threats on the life of Governor Martin and other state officials. At 8:00 AM on May 26th he was out in front of "C" ward with a group of inmates forming for the usual walk. Near the group was a fence where a pony belonging to Philip Eastman, the superintendent's son, was hitched. Corbett slipped to one side of the group, suddenly leaped on the pony, and rode off in the direction of the city.

Because of his recent threats to the Governor, two attendants were sent at once to the state house. When Governor Martin was told that he would probably be Corbett's first victim, he remarked, "Oh, I guess not. Boston isn't going to hurt anybody." A number of men searched the surrounding countryside for Corbett all day without result. After a police search of Topeka, it was decided that he did not enter the city. It was assumed that he had gone off to his soldier homestead in Cloud County. Judge George A. Huron, of Huron and Davis, attorneys, 513 Kansas Avenue, issued a broadside supporting this theory. It described Corbett and gave instructions for his apprehension.

The first word about Corbett's whereabouts came from a livery man near Neodesha, over a hundred miles away. The man telegraphed to Governor Martin that he had the pony used in the escape and would turn it over to any autho-

rized person. He was informed that someone would be sent for the pony. Asked if he knew where Corbett was, he replied, "In Washington or Mexico." Putting together the fact of Thatcher's visit and the location of the pony, there seems little doubt that Corbett turned to his friend of prison days for help in his getaway.

Then followed an exchange of letters in the Topeka newspapers. The first letter came from Thatcher, on June 4th in the Topeka Capital. He expressed gratification over Corbett's escape. "I learned of it before I saw anything in the paper. How I learned of it is no man's business," he said. Proclaiming Corbett's good intentions, he repeated as his own belief all of the paranoid accusations made by Corbett during his stay at the asylum. Corbett, he said, wished to leave the United States, as "he did not wish to live in a country that would allow such an outrage to be perpetrated on a soldier who has spent the best part of his life defending the old flag, and who had avenged the assassination of so great a man as our wonderful President Lincoln." He accused the asylum administration of being rotten, and made an impassioned plea to all ex-soldiers and the Grand Army of the Republic for Corbett's freedom.

Jacob Stotler, a member of the State Board of Charities, defended the asylum in the Topeka Capital. He called Thatcher a victim of the itch for notoriety. He demanded proof of the asylum's mismanagement. He offered full cooperation in any investigation. "In the meantime, God pity the Neodesha schools," he concluded.

George W. Knapp, representative of the 75th district, related the circumstances of his support for Corbett as doorkeeper. He added that he and V.B. Shafer, commander of the Concordia GAR Post, went to calm Corbett during the incident which led to his arrest, and that with great difficulty he prevented

Corbett from shooting Shafer.

From here on nothing more is heard of Corbett's whereabouts, and he leaves us in flesh and spirit, but not in print. Impostors have appeared in enough quantity to make Corbett a legend in a very short time, and variations of his story continue to appear in the press.

A man turned up in San Angelo, Texas, in 1905, saying he was Corbett. He said he had worked as a travelling salesman for a Topeka patent medicine company since escaping from the asylum. John Gardiner, the police sergeant, George A. Huron, Corbett's guardian, and one William Thatcher, Oklahoma Territory, a former fellow patient at the asylum, all went to San Angelo to identify him. He bore no resemblance to Corbett, and they stayed to testify at his trial for fraud. He was sent to Atlanta for three years at hard labor.

A writer who says he knew Corbett wrote an article for a western magazine. He says he has the answer to the puzzle; he wrote that a man who was "undoubtedly" Corbett sank in a sandbar in the Kaw and perished, not two miles from the Topeka Asylum.

A local newspaper quoted somebody else as saying that the probate judge in the Corbett case was none other than Charles Curtis, later U.S. senator from Kansas. And so it goes.

This writer believes the account given here is as close to the facts as possible from the available research material and so, at least temporarily, he closes his books. Boston Corbett, who stirred up so many vivid imaginations, as did Stanton and Baker and other Civil War personalities he was associated with, continues to exercise a magnetic appeal to the historically minded.

INSANE MAN ESCAPED.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, May 26, 1888.

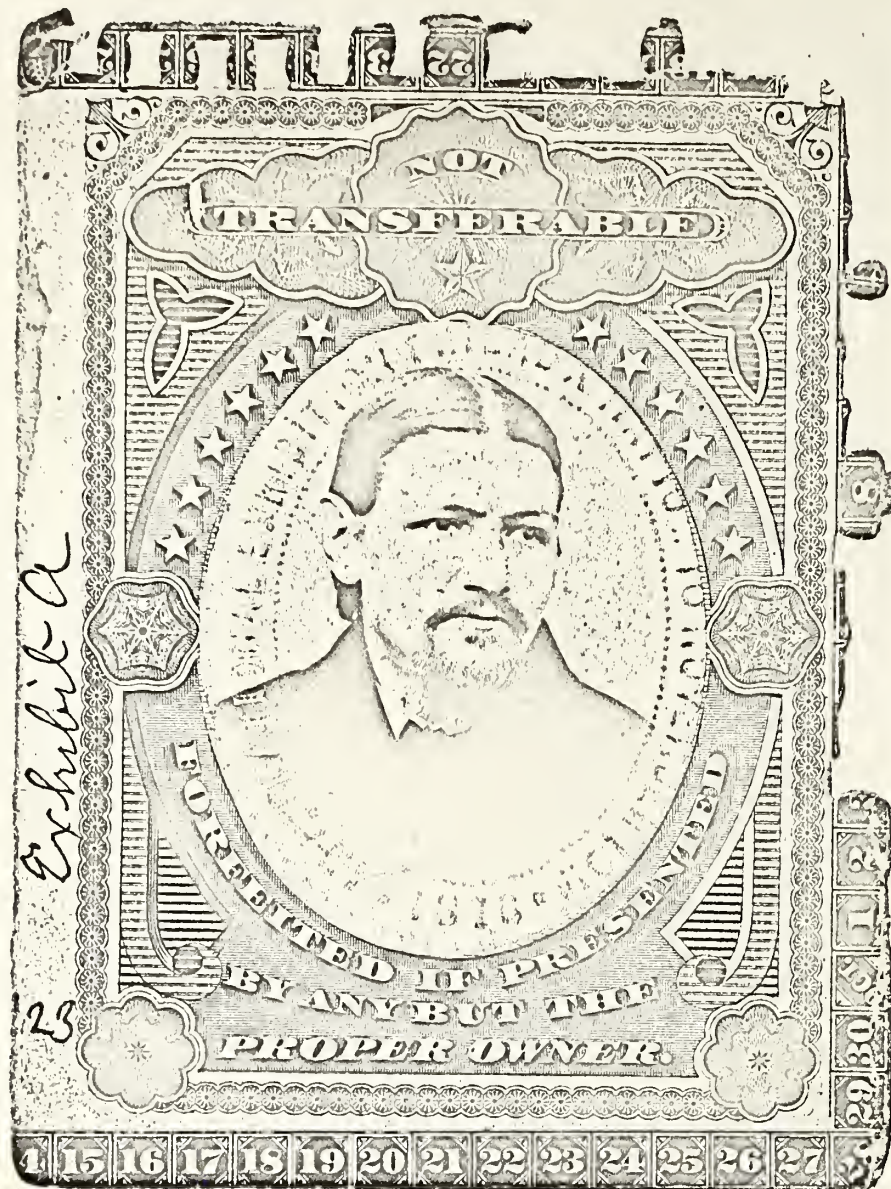
DEAR SIR:

BOSTON CORBETT, an insane man, escaped from the Insane Asylum at Topeka this morning, and is supposed to be heading for Cloud County. He is about 55 years of age; about 5 feet, 4 inches high; has plucked all his beard out down to the lower part of his ears; has gray chin whiskers and monstache; gray hair, cut square at bottom, and parts his hair in the middle; he wore a dark jeans suit, and black soft hat; and was riding a bay or sorrel pony with a boy's saddle.

He is regarded as a dangerous man, but was unarmed when he escaped. If he comes your way arrest him and return him to the Asylum at once, or telegraph Dr. B. D. EASTMAN, Superintendent Insane Asylum, Topeka, for orders.

G. A. HURON,

Guardian BOSTON CORBETT.



Text surrounding picture reads: International Exhibition
Philad'a May 10th to November 10th, 1876

Dates punched out, presumably for attendance, are:

October 4 - 7, incl

October 9 - 21, incl.

October 23 - 28, incl

The 8th and 22nd were Saturdays

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